

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /068 W

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R 100409Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1354

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, MNUC, NZ

SUBJ: FEDERATION OF LABOUR (FOL) ANNUAL CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY - ANNUAL FOL CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN WELLINGTON MAY 4-7. PRESIDENT SIR TOM SKINNER WAS REELECTED FOR FIVE-YEAR TERM AND ALL SITTING MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE WERE RETURNED. CONFERENCE WAS VOCIFEROUSLY ANTI-MULDOON. RESOLUTION OPPOSING NPW VISITS "UNTIL SUCH TIMES WHEN INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE THAT NUCLEAR ENERGY IS NOT HARMFUL TO THE ECOLOGY AND TO THE HEALTH OF THE PEOPLE" WAS ADOPTED. END SUMMARY.

2. NOT SURPRISINGLY, MAIN FOCUS OF CONFERENCE WAS ITS VIOLENTLY ANTI-GOVERNMENT STAND. PM MULDOON WAS STRONGLY CRITICIZED FOR HIS PROPOSAL THAT VOTES BE HELD TO DETERMINE WHETHER WORKERS WANTED "VOLUNTARY" OR "COMPULSORY" UNIONISM. PROPOSAL, WHICH WAS MAJOR PLANK IN NATIONAL PARTY 1975 PLATFORM, IS SEEN BY FOL AS ATTEMPT TO DESTROY ORGANIZED LABOR IN NEW ZEALAND.

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CONFERENCE ADOPTED RESOLUTION CALLING FOR WITHDRAWAL

FROM TRI-PARTITE INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL IF PROCEDURES
FOR ELECTIONS ARE INITIATED BY GOVERNMENT.
CRITICISM OF MULDOON GOVERNMENT BORDERED ON HYSTERICAL
AT TIMES AS VARIOUS SPEAKERS, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF
EXECUTIVE, REFERRED TO MULDOON AS "FASCIST DICTATOR"
AND "SAWED-OFF CAESAR".

3. ISSUE OF NPW VISITS WAS TOUCHED UPON IN SECRETARY'S
REPORT CONVERING NUCLEAR TESTING IN PACIFIC AND WAS
SUBJECT OF TWO RESOLUTIONS. FIRST RESOLUTION CALLED
ON GNZ TO RESCIND ITS DECISION TO ALLOW NPW VISITS.
SECOND, RESOLUTION, AS ORIGINALLY WRITTEN, CALLED ON
FOL TO "OPPOSE ANY NUCLEAR-POWERED AND NUCLEAR-ARMED
VESSELS IN NEW ZEALAND WATERS." RESOLUTION WAS AMENDED
IN COMMITTEE TO INCLUDE FOLLOWING SAVINGS CLAUSE, "THE
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE (WILL) ADHERE TO ITS PRESENT POSITION
OF OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR-POWERED WARSHIPS UNTIL SUCH
TIMES WHEN INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE THAT NUCLEAR ENERGY
IS NOT HARMFUL TO THE ECOLOGY AND TO THE HEALTH OF
THE PEOPLE." AMENDED RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED BY
CONFERENCE.

4. COMMENT - CONFERENCE GENERATED MUCH MORE HEAT THAN
LIGHT. MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, LEVEL OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT
RHETORIC IS INDICATOR OF FOL'S DIMINISHED
POLITICAL STRENGTH. ITS LEADERS LOOKING TIRED AND OLD,
SUPPLY LITTLE LEADERSHIP AT A TIME
WHEN THE GOVERNMENT HAS A STRONG MANDATE IN THE INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS AREA AND INTENDS TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT. GIVEN
THIS LEADERSHIP VACUUM IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING TO SEE
AND INCREASE IN THE LEVEL OF MILITANCY EXHIBITED BY LOCAL
UNIONS AND TRADES COUNCILS. THE LEFT, WHICH IS STRONG IN THE
IMPORTANT AUCKLAND, WELLINGTON AND CHRISTCHURCH TRADES COUNCILS,
IS UNLIKELY TO PASS UP THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INCREASE ITS
INFLUENCE IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT.
KILLGORE

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